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SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1986

The Progressive Review

THE WAR ON DRUGS & DEMOCRACY

Using initiatives to green America

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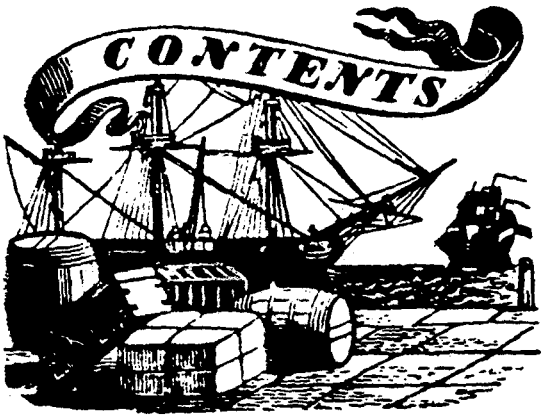

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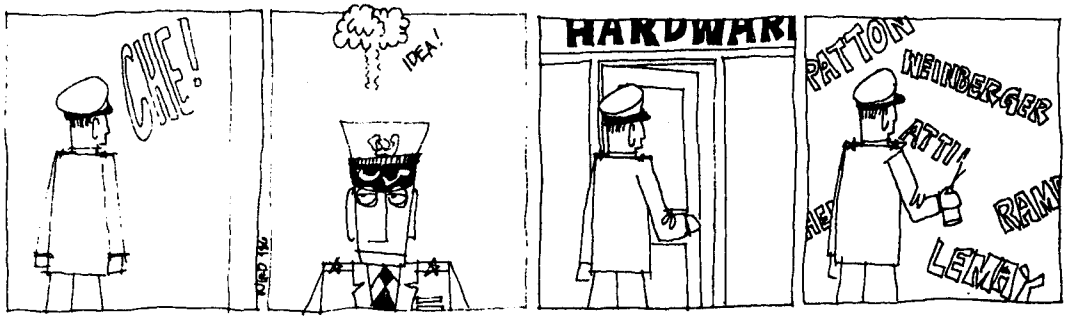
WEATHER REPORT



Students turn left

Liberalism apparently made something of a comeback at the recent national convention of the U.S. Student Association.

250 delegates -- student government leaders from some 100 campuses around the country -- endorsed a wide array of "progressive" platform positions, and unanimously re-elected officers who in the last year steered USSA away from its studiedly moderate course of the early eighties.

"The pendulum is swinging toward a more progressive base," Tom Swan, USSA's newly reelected president, says.

Swan doesn't call the delegates' mood "liberal" because liberalism is "dead on campus. It's associated with the old Democratic party."

But by any name, the delegates approved 70-some pages of resolutions favoring the California grape boycott and condemning the arms race, U.S. policy toward South Africa, William Rehnquist's nomination as chief justice and, with a bow toward the diminishing numbers of conservative delegates, communism.

USSA began a rightward shift in 1980, in part to deflect a challenge from the now-defunct American Student Association -- which marketed itself as a conservative alternative to USSA, although it rarely lobbied in Congress -- and in part because the member schools demanded it.

Until this year, USSA -- which lobbies on students' behalf in Washington, D.C. and is probably the biggest student group in the country -- carefully avoided taking vehement stands on "nonstudent issues" like abortion, labor relations or military registration.

Sticking to overtly collegiate issues like financial aid, USSA gradually rebuilt its membership and outlasted the ASA, which was troubled by internal scandal almost since its inception.

At the 1986 meeting, however, there were few avowed conservatives.

Southern Cal's delegates did walk out of a "pro choice" speech by Gaye Williams of the National Congress of Black Political Women.

But the USC delegates, said Illinois delegate Peg Phillips disapprovingly, "wore suits and ties everywhere they went." *-CPS*

Computer ills

Ninety-one workers at a plant in Albuquerque, New Mexico are suing their company for overexposing them to toxic fumes from epoxies, resins and solvents used in making computer components. Thirty of these previously healthy workers -- mostly women -- now suffer from cancer of the skin, uterus, ovaries, cervix, colon, breast, brain or thyroid.

One worker, Yolanda Lozano, for six years wound and waxed transformers and cleaned them in a solvent bath. She now has malignant melanoma, a skin cancer that her doctor told her hispanics rarely get. Lozano took her complaint to Albuquerque lawyer Josephine Rohr, who has had to battle not only the company's denials but opposition

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from the local chapter of the union representing plant workers, who preferred to fight layoffs.

The case has caught the attention of doctors, epidemiologists and toxologists who are studying environmentally induced damage to the immune system. Many researchers see a pattern in the symptoms of workers exposed to a wide variety of chemicals, particularly in large doses.

Sodomy patrol

In a protest of the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling against certain sexual practices, a group of six women took to the streets of Boulder, Colorado recently as the town's very own "Sodomy Patrol."

Wearing T-shirts with the patrol's name and carrying binoculars and cameras, the women went about the city, asking passers-by if they "had any friends or neighbors they would like to turn in," said Jeanne Winer, one of the court decision protesters. As it happened, she said, "a lot of people didn't know what was going on. They read about things like [the court ruling] and they think it just had to do with gay people in Georgia. They don't think it's going to touch them."

Poverty & hispanics

A study released by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities predicts that the poverty rate among hispanic Americans may soon surpass that of blacks in the U.S. The center's figures show that the black poverty rate of 31 percent in 1985 was approximately the same as the rate in 1979, while the poverty rate among hispanics jumped from 22 to 29 percent during the same period. The study also shows that 53 percent of hispanic families headed by single women live in poverty, compared to 50 percent of such families in the black community. Added the researchers: "the only reason that the overall hispanic poverty rate is still lower than the black poverty rate is that the percentage of families that are headed by a female is lower for hispanics than for blacks."

Oldest alternative press

The Charles H. Kerr Company, the oldest alternative publishing house in the United States, and probably in the entire world, is currently celebrating its centennial. Founded a few weeks before the Haymarket tragedy of 1866, Kerr is best known as the publisher of social and cultural criticism and protest by such authors as Clarance Darrow, Eugene Debs, Mother Jones, Jack London, Carl Sanburg, Upton Sinclair, Walt Whitman and Oscar Wilde. In recent years the Kerr company, a not-for-profi cooperative, has published numerous original studies and reprints in the field of radical and women's history. It has also started a poetry series and has reissued several classics of American radical humor. For a copy of the Kerr centennial catalog, write Charles H. Kerr Publishing Co, 1740 West Greenleaf Avenue, Chicago Ill 60626. — Bloomington Post-Amerikan.

Homelessness rises

Homelessness activists are expecting record numbers of people seeking shelter this winter — despite a federal report suggesting that there has been no increase in homelessness in the past couple of years. The federal figures were extrapolated from New York City,

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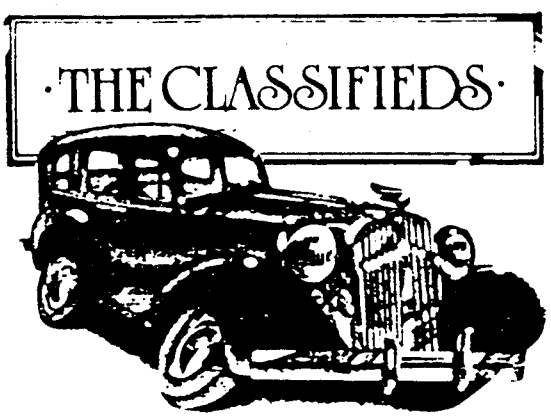
but NYC spends an unusually large amount on shelters so the 2.3 to one ratio of those on the streets to those in shelters can't be applied nationwide. According to one study, Cincinnati has a ratio of 80 to one and Santa Barbara has a ratio of 15 to one.

•

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force reports some 2000 acts of violence last year motivated by anti-homosexual hostility. Included were 445 physical assaults, 20 homicides and nine bomb threats.



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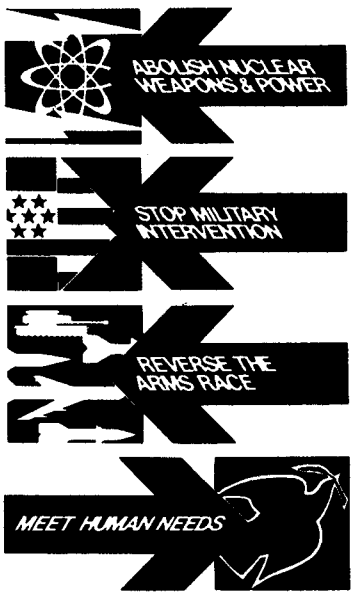

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The war against drugs & democracy

Once a street menace, narcotics turn into a national security threat. Headlines, police blotters, death certificates testify to a nation on a binge — **US News & World Report**

President Reagan yesterday declared drug dealers a greater national security threat than terrorists, kicking off a campaign that will focus on drug testing and prevention in the workplace and at schools — **Washington Times**

The nation is indeed on a binge but the excess involves not heroin or crack, but a growing hysteria about a long-existing problem — an hysteria that places the Constitution and the individual freedoms it was designed to protect in their most vulnerable position since the days of the Nixon outrages. In dozens of ways, from dozens of different sources, we are being told that to deal with drug addiction, we must go cold turkey on democracy.

The hysteria makes little sense. According to National Institute on Drug Abuse, drug use in this country peaked in 1979. Marijuana use by high school students, for example, is less than a half of what it was then. Heroin overdose deaths are down 25% from 1975. And while drug overdose deaths in major cities overall are up about 18% over ten years ago (largely because of cocaine), most the rise has occurred **during** the get-tough Reagan administration. During the Carter administration, for example, deaths by drug overdose actually fell to a quarter of their present level.

At least one reason for this little mentioned disparity: when the Democrats were in power, Congress and the White House were willing to spend money to deal with the problem. Even

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while shedding crocodile tears over the "drug menace," the Reagan junta has refused to put its money where its mouth is. Thus, for example, publicly-funded drug facilities have lost about one-third of the treatment slots that were available in the seventies.

So, just for starters, a more rational, less instrusive approach would include funding drug-treatment facilities at the level of the days before the know-nothing-spend-nothings came aboard the ship of state.

This is not wishful thinking: during the last half of the 1970s, heroin deaths in major cities dropped from 1700 to under 500 a year. The nation's drug problem was getting under control — without either repression or hysterics. With the decline of treatment funding, however, these deaths rose again to over 1200 last year. The new interest in cocaine and, to a much lesser extent, PCP also helped to reverse the trend, but this is not surprising since they were both new in popularity and being sold to a new market for whom neither treatment nor education were yet widely available. It is important to remember how recently information about the true dangers of cocaine became broad knowledge. Cocaine long had a benign image in the pantheon of drugs and until sports stars and other well-known figures began dying of the stuff, it was considered in many quarters a safe form of recreation. The sane reaction in the face of this new understanding would be adequate programs of treatment and information. Instead, the Reaganites and the me-too politicians of both parties have responded in a such a bizarre way that one is tempted to imagine that if they had been around when the danger of flouroscopes had been finally realized they would have declared a war on shoe salesmen.

But instead of dealing with the matter as the public health problem that it is, we have been offered a plethora of punitive measures that strike at the heart of our freedoms with little promise that we will get more than a slight statistical remission in return. Consider:

• Forced drug testing for government employees: Already struck down by a number of lower courts, its advocates seem to be relying on an increasingly authoritarian Supreme Court to back them up. This testing, not only a blatant attack on individual privacy and a violation of constitutional limits on search and seizure as well as the protection against self-incrimination, is so unreliable that a study in the Journal of the AMA found false positive results in up to 66% of the tests checked. The study found that some labs even went so far as to make up results.

Further, the tests can be contaminated by extraneous factors. One lab reported that a high number of false postives were the result of lab workers cooking tacos in a sterilizing oven. The Air Force had to reinstate 6500 men who had been dismissed because of positive results. The Navy had a similar experience. Cold capsules, poppy seeds, herbal tea, even having been in a room where marijuana was smoked can produce false positive results. Even more frightening, dark skin pigmentation can throw the readings off. (It should be noted that the contrary is also true. Alternative chemists have found that liquid soap, salt, mold and halazone can cause false negative results).

Writing in the August 17 Washington Post, Stephen Dujack raised the key question about drug testing:

"... if we accept that why not stop embezzlement by mandatory scrutiny of everyone's bank records? Why not stop child pornography by mandatory searches of everyone's house? Why not stop shop lifting by requiring strip searches at all cash registers? Unreasonable search and seizure by the government was one of the causes of the America Revolution. The Fourth Amendment was never meant to apply only to some crimes, even in the event of a crusade by the first lady."

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HEY ANN! WHAT'S THE DIFF BETWEEN RELIGION & PATRIOTISM?
I'LL BITE...
CLOSE: WHEN A DOG HOWLS AT THE MOON THAT'S RELIGION
O YEAH
OW.. OW.. OW..
AND WHEN A DOG BARKS AT A STRANGER...
THAT'S PATRIOTISM!
WOOF WOOF WOOF!

• Forced drug testing in private industry: Increasingly pervasive, this practice is, under current legal interpretations, exempt from the constitutional barriers that government workers can claim. Thus more and more Americans are finding themselves subjected to practices that are constitutionally repugnant — but without recourse. Their alternative is unemployment. The result is an intrusion on the private lives of employees reminiscent of the early days of the industrial revolution when young female workers were forced to live in dormitories to protect their morals. Big brother, in the America of 1985, has been privatized. (Little help in this regard can be expected, incidentally, from our larger media. The Kansas City Star once used drug-sniffing dogs in its newsroom and the New York Times requires pre-employment drug tests).

• Legislators are increasingly willing to sacrifice hard-won civil liberties gains, such as prohibitions against the use of ill-gotten evidence, in order to "win" the war on drugs.

• The House even suggested that the military to be deputized as civilian law enforcement agents to aid in the battle. And the Senate, not to be beaten, was considering abrogating Civil Service laws so they could not be used as a defense against drug testing.

• Candidates have engaged in literal pissing matches with their opponents to prove that they are drug free and therefore, presumably, qualified for public office. (This is probably a spin-off of the Senate's adoption of the Meese standard — namely if you can't convict them you gotta confirm them).

• Schools have used the drug problem as an excuse to trample on

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student's privacy and other rights, including locker searches and urine tests as a prerequisite for engaging in extra-curricular activities. One pitiful school district was reported spending four times as much on its drug program as it spent on books.

• Similarly, the excuse of drugs have unleashed the police to engage in a broad range of questionable activities. In Washington, DC, these have included random stopping of citizens on the street, road-blocks and even the selling of PCP in order to catch the purchasers.

Of course, the ultimate irony is that under such draconian methods, the tendency will be to increase the real problem that people are worried about — not drugs, but the criminality that results from them. By essentially ostracizing drug users from employment and other aspects of American life, we will be contributing to the development of an underground underclass. As Robert Myers put it in the Realist: "If you refuse to submit to drug testing, you could very likely end up trying to make a living at one of the few jobs available which does not require drug-testing: drug dealing."

Furthermore, the history of Prohibition and the record so far for Prohibition II suggests that attempting to interdict the drug flow is a futile effort. Rep. Glen English, who chairs the House oversight subcommittee on drug eradication, estimates that their will be 18,000 drug flights into this country this year. The Customs Service has only six aircraft and eight helicopters to combat the flow and because of the Reagan budget, can only operate these craft 40 hours a week. English adds that on the entire West Coast their are only eight Customs boats and in the Carribean only a handful of Coast Guard vessels to deal with an estimated 3600 boatloads of cocaine expected from the Bahamas alone.

There are approaches that would at least mitigate the problems stemming from the use of drugs. One, as mentioned before, is to spend more money on treatment. Another is to decriminalize the usage of drugs and to treat such usage as a health rather than as a criminal matter. How far we are from such a sane approach has been demonstrated in New York City where law enforcement officials have even opposed making disposable needles available to drug addicts so as to cut down on the transmission of AIDS. In the minds of prosecutors, apparently, it is better to die of AIDs than to live on heroin.

If we decriminalized usage than we could begin to take a less mythical approach towards drugs. Arnold Trebach, author of **The War on Us, The Story of the American Anti-Drug Crusade and Its Victims** and a professor at American University's School of Justice, recounted in an interview with Washington's City Paper:

"I told a DC cop, a friend of mine, that what makes heroin a good maintenance drug is that it is not an organically destructive drug. While it is addicting, it does not hurt your body like tobacco or alcohol does. And he said, 'Then what in hell am I doing out in the street chasing all these guys for?' And this was a good cop, a smart cop. I think we have to realize that as bad as heroin is, and I think it is a terribly addicting substance, you can use it if you have it under control. What I mean by that, if you have clean heroin and good needles and all. And if you were a somewhat mature addict, you can use it all you life and never get harmed. I mean the horrible thing would be that you need it, that you were addicted. But unlike an alcohol drinker or tobacco smoker, you won't at an advanced age find yourself dying of an organic illness."

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Trebach believes in the British system, where doctors can prescribe narcotics and if you are using prescribed drugs the police, for the most part, will leave you alone.

Although there has been some retrenchment from this enlightened view under the Thatcher administration, Trebach says it works: "Despite all the talk you hear that England's system is failing they have accomplished an amazing feat in the modern world. For most addicts, they have separated being a serious narcotic addict from being a predatory violent criminal. ... You don't make addiction go away, but when you become a heavy narcotic user the odds are you won't become a predatory criminal. We must do that in this society. We must break the link."

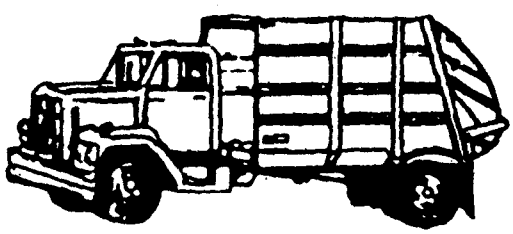
But we are so far from such a goal that those who espouse it have been blacked out of the public discussion of the drug problem.

That would be bad enough, but the cost is far higher than lives wasted or lost because of the lack of humane laws and well-funded treatment programs. In our anxiety over drugs we becoming prisoners of our security. And we are acting as willing victims for those who would have it just that way.

The neo-Puritans and proto-fascists of the day are skillfully using the drug issue to encourage a distrust of democratic values and increasing reliance on the means of autocratic government. The docility of the American public, of organized labor, of the press in the face of this effort is as good evidence as there is of the extent to which the Reagan years have worn down the country's willingness to be free. We seem to be suffering from a serious case of democratic burnout.

What is really behind the war on drugs is nothing less than another attempt by the Reaganistas and others to impose social control — no, not only over dissidents and free-thinkers, but over all considered to be unreliable, untrustworthy, or insubordinate. To be a good American in this frightening new vision, you must not only be ready to prove your loyalty but your willingness to be an mindless, obedient foot soldier in the service of the state and of corporate America. Don't worry about the draft coming back. Under the rules of the Reagan era, we're all in the army now. Ironically, there is more than a little evidence that drug use is directly related to the meaningless, subservient worklife of many Americans. Take away their drugs and you may find that underneath they are really angry. And well they should be.

For if we accept the notion that to be a good American, a good worker, we must pee on demand; if we acquiese to this modern variety of trial by water; if we are not infuriated — not merely in a legal sense but in a visceral, red-blooded American sense, by such an arrogant presumption by our government and our corporations, then there is very little left to fight over. We will have traded what is most vital to being an American for a drug-free, democracy-free society. —Sam Smith



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Greening America by initiative

David D. Schmidt

The United States may not have a European-style 'Green' political party, but a flourishing indigenous Green movement is evident in half a dozen states where environmentalists are taking the offensive this fall with ballot initiative campaigns to enact new laws by popular vote. Thanks to the success of environmental groups' successful petition drives earlier this year, voter will find measures on November ballots proposing a stringent safe drinking water law in California; bans on nuclear power, nuclear weapons production, and radioactive waste dumping in Oregon; cleanup of toxic waste dumps in Massachusetts, and a sales tax hike to pay for fish and wildlife conservation programs in Washington state.

Alaskans kicked off the 1986 election season by approving a nuclear weapons freeze initiative by a decisive margin of 58 percent in their August 26 statewide primary -- proof that the freeze movement was not just a passing fad, but a goal that grassroots America continues to support. And peace activists are moving to harness this latent support with more initiatives slated for November ballots:

* Oregon's economic conversion initiative would give tax credits to companies that convert from production of nuclear weapons components to other pursuit -- and ban nuclear weapons production entirely in 1990.

* Nuclear free zone initiatives to ban nuclear weapons transport, deployment or production will be on ballots in Marin and Sonoma Counties (near San Francisco), and Berkeley, California.

* Residents of Tacoma, Washington will vote on a no first use of nuclear weapons policy.

* Over 100,00 voters in 35 Massachusetts towns will vote on a proposal for a nuclear test ban, and mutual, gradual elimination of nuclear weapons by Russia and the United States by the year 2000.

* Los Angeles and Baltimore voters will consider jobs with peace initiatives, which call for reduced military spending and encourage non-military local economic development.

* In Contra Costa County, California (near San Francisco), voters will decide on an initiative calling for the federal government to stop sending weapons from their county to Central America.

Taken together, all these peace initiatives signify an upsurge in grassroots activism that could, if it continues to grow over the next two years, become a formidable factor in the 1988 presidential campaign.

The timing went critically wrong for Chernobyl's nuclear reactor operators this past spring -- but the Russian disaster worked to the advantage of the Oregonian anti-nuclear group Forelaws on Board, which was at that time conducting a lagging petition drive to put an initiative on the ballot that would shut down the state's only nuclear power plant. The petition drive breezed to success on the fallout, metaphorically speaking, from Chernobyl. Now, Forelaws is fighting a no-holds-barred publicity battle to shut down Trojan, Oregon's only working nuclear power plant. The plant's owner, Portland General Electric, has hired the Los Angeles-based public relations firm of Winner/Wagner to wage a $2 million "vote no" ad campaign. If voters approve the measure, Oregon will be the first state to ban nuclear power. Forelaws' second initiative would require cleanup of a holding pond full of low-level radioactive sludge generated by Teledyne Wah-Chang Albany's now-defunct zirconium refining operation on the Columbia River.

In California, the Sierra Club and other environmental groups led a petition drive that

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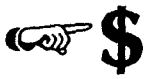
collected over half a million signatures to secure ballot placement for a "safe drinking water and toxic enforcement initiative." If approved by voters, it would ban contamination of water by about 160 known carcinogens and mutagens, and require industries using the chemicals to notify anyone whom they expose to these toxics -- whether it be factory workers, product users, or, in cases of environmental contamination, whole communities. The initiative is expected to boost the gubernatorial campaign of Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley, who is making toxic hazards to drinking water -- and incumbent Governor Deukmejian's failure to solve such problems -- a central campaign issue.

Despite early polls showing overwhelming voter support for the "get tough on toxics" initiative, as proponents have christened it, industry opponents not giving up. Internal documents leaked from the Chevron Oil and Chemical Company detail plans for a $5.7 million 'vote no' publicity campaign funded by the oil, chemical, electronics, and agribusiness industries. Opponents have hired the political campaign management firm of Russo, Watts, which managed Governor Deukmejian's 1982 election, to direct the "vote no" advertising blitz.

In September, opponents started 'vote no' avertising with billboards throughout the state, as well as radio and television ads arguing that the initiative has "too many exemptions." For example, the ads complain, military-generated and nuclear plant toxic chemicals are not covered. Although this is a factual claim, the implication that such exemptions are a flaw in the initiative is a distortion of the truth. State law, no matter how well-drafted, cannot regulate toxic hazards on military bases and nuclear plant sites because these are under the federal government's jurisdiction.

Initiative sponsors began airing 'vote yes' ads in late September, utilizing free broadcast response time granted by television and radio stations under the Federal Communications Commission's fairness doctrine. To get free publicity and raise money, proponents organized a "Caravan of the Stars" bus trip for the last weekend in September. Hollywood celebrities endorsing the initiative packed the bus, which traveled to fundraising events throughout the state. "It's the biggest assemblage of stars for a political cause since the World War II war bonds campaign," commented Carl Pope of the Sierra Club.

The Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group is sponsoring an initiative to mandate prompt cleanup of the hundreds of dangerous toxic waste dumps in the state that didn't make the federal government's Superfund list. After state officials identify all the toxic waste sites, the firms which dumped



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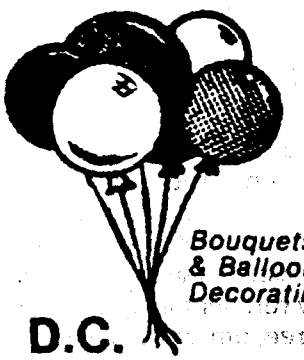

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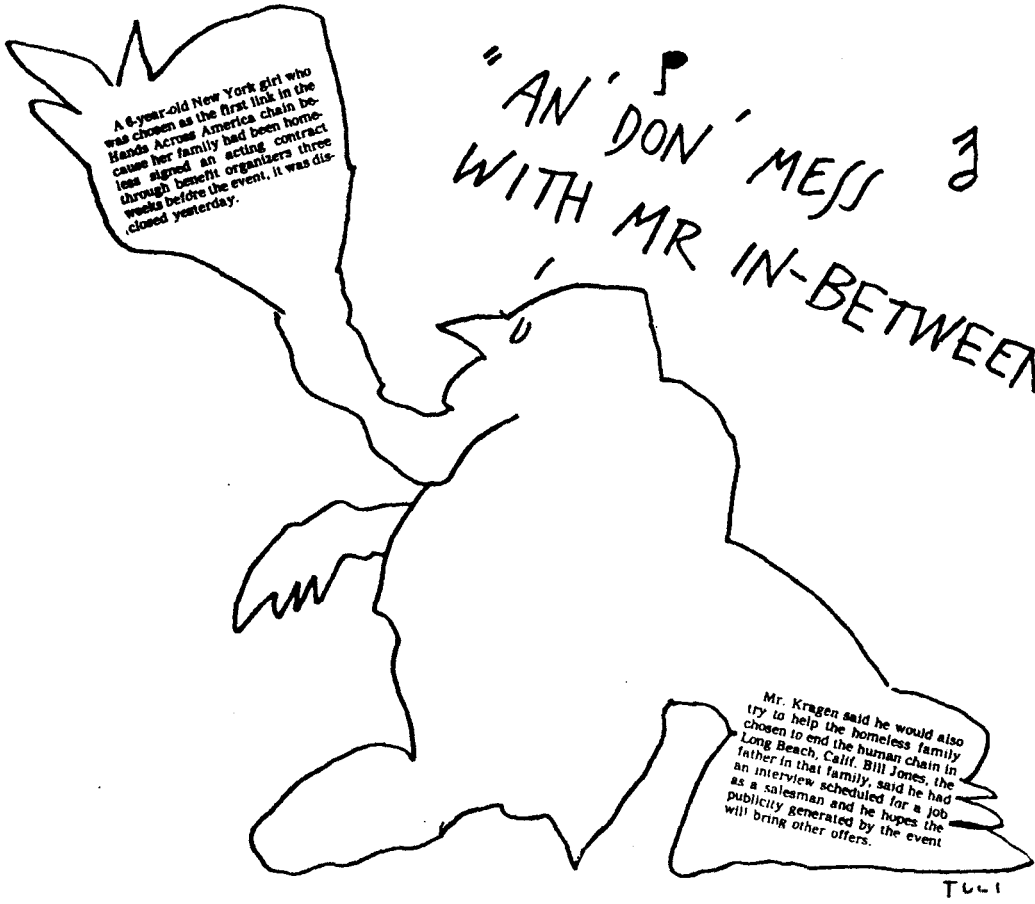
A 6-year-old New York girl who was chosen as the first link in the Hands Across America chain because her family had been homeless signed an acting contract through benefit organizers three weeks before the event, it was disclosed yesterday.
"AN' I DON' MESS WITH MR IN-BETWEEN!"
Mr. Kragen said he would also try to help the homeless family chosen to end the human chain in Long Beach, Calif. Bill Jones, the father in that family, said he had an interview scheduled for a job as a salesman and he hopes the publicity generated by the event will bring other offers.

the waste would be required to eliminate any health hazards within four years. Early opposition to the measure has come not from chemical companies but from the New England Legal Foundation (a 'public interest' law firm patterned after James Watt's Mountain State Legal Foundation) and, surprisingly, the state chapter of the League of Women Voters! Proponents say that some local chapters of the League support the initiative.

On September 23, in an effort to bolster public perception of the need for the initiative, backers held a press conference revealing the state's updated list of problem toxic waste dumps. The list, obtained from the Department of Environmental Quality Engineering under the Freedom of Information Act, pinpointed 345 toxic sites -- nearly triple last year's list of 118.

Faced with a rising tide of environmental initiative petitions, legislatures in some states have already responded to environmentalists' demands. In Massachusetts, the legislature passed MassPIRG's acid rain reduction initiative last December, just after sponsors collected enough signatures to put it on the state ballot. In Wyoming, in March, the legislature approved a bill to keep sufficient water in streams for fish and wildlife -- again, under pressure from an initiative that would otherwise have gone on the November ballot. And Arizona Governor Bruce Babbitt played an instrumental role in working with the legislature there to pass a safe drinking water bill similar to an initiative proposed by the Sierra Club, Common Cause, and allied labor unions. That law, which tightens pesticide use regulations and bans dumping of toxics that pollute groundwater, passed in the legislature in May just as initiative sponsors neared their goal of 100,000 signatures.

In Washington State, environmentalists were mulling over the idea of petitioning for a 1987 ballot initiative to give citizens veto power over a proposed federal repository for high-level nuclear waste -- but the legislature acted before the petition drive started. Meeting in special session August 1, legislators placed on the November ballot Referendum #40, which

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What you can do:

The initiative campaigns mentioned above need volunteers and contributions. Call or write:

California: Sierra Club, (415) 923-5695.
Massachusetts: MassPIRG,
37 Temple Place,
Boston, MA 02111-1305;
(617) 423-1796.
Oregon: Forelaws on Board,
1221 Sunset Dr.
Ontario, OR 97914
(503) 889-2460.

asks, "Shall state officials continue challenges to the federal selection process for high-level nuclear waste repositories, and shall a means be provided for voter disapproval of any Washington site?"

At the local level, Californians have been fighting urban sprawl with no less than 72 city or county initiatives and referendums on zoning and urban growth matters over the past decate. Despite the overwhelming campaign spending advantage of development interests seeking to defeat these measures, anti-growth forces won two-thirds of these campaigns.

This growth revolt, which has centered around the San Francisco Bay Area, has spread south to San Diego, where voters last November approved strict development limits by a 57 percent margin, and west to Honolulu. In that balmy city, voters in 1984 approved an initiative to block a high-density high-rise development, and a group called "Citizens to Save Fort DeRussy" is sponsoring an initiative this year to stop a proposed convention center/hotel complex from being built on a Waikiki military base that is mostly open space at present.

Even in Los Angeles, where the philosopy of unrestrained urban growth has reached its ultimate expression, an initiative campaign is underway to limit highrise development. City Council Members Marvin Braude and Zev Yaroslavsky collected over 105,000 signatures to qualify their measure for the November ballot.

Meanwhile, in Northern California, San Franciscans will be voting on another measure to limit high-rise construction, and environmentalists in neighboring San Mateo County are sponsoring an initiative to strengthen the county's strict limits in coastal development and prevent construction of facilities for offshore oil drilling. In nearby Walnut Creek, voters will decide the fate of a proposed new shopping mall.

It's too early to tell if all this means that a "Green Revolution" in U.S. politics is forthcoming. If a powerful Green movement develops in this nation, however, it is much more likely to make its initial impact with ballot initiatives than in legislatures. Without the system of proportional representation common in Europe, U.S. third parties in the 20th century have been doomed to failure. But we've got something most European democracies don't: Initiative and referendum, whereby the people can pass a law, whether the politicians like it or not. It's a democratic muscle that environmentalists should exercise more and more.

Environmentalists' past initiative campaigns have resulted in some landmark achievements: Stopping water pollution from dredge mining in Idaho (1954), the California Coastal Conservation Initiative (1972), bottle bills in Maine and Michigan (1976), and restrictions on nuclear power and/or nuclear waste disposal in Montana, Massachusetts, Maine, Oregon, South Dakota, and Washington (1978-1985). These victories were achieved despite overwhelming "Vote No" campaigns paid for by the affected industries. How were environmentalists able to overcome this handicap? With tremendous popular support, savvy campaign advertising strategy, and lots of work by grassroots activists.

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David D. Schmidt is Executive Director of the Initiative Resource Center, an information clearinghouse on initiative and referendum campaigns, strategies and procedures throughout the nation. To find out more about initiatives and referendums in your city or state, call (202) 387-0830, or write IRC, P.O. Box 65023, Washington, D.C. 20035.

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DIVESTMENT ON CAMPUS

Two students describe the anti-apartheid movement at their college

At Harvard

John Plotz

Last spring the pressure on college campuses for South African divestment became acute. Students were arrested by the truckload at Berkeley, the shanties Dartmouth students erected were abused, someone firebombed the ones at John Hopkins, and hundreds of protestors were being pushed around at Yale. Activity on the Harvard campus, on the wane since violent protests against a South African diplomat the previous spring, started to wax again. The few small protests of fall were put behind, and the Southern Africa Solidarity Committee planned great things.

For weeks the SASC members scurried around, planning open meetings, representative committees, and, beneath it all, larger and deeper things. They were sure that the time to strike at Derek Bok and the Harvard Corporation had arrived.

Derek Bok, the president of the university, and the trustees of the Harvard Corporation had made it clear they were opposed to complete divestment. Harvard had already divested itself of any company which did not support the Sullivan Principles, and was in the process of selling stock in companies that had more than half of their holdings in South Africa, a figure apparently picked arbitrarily. This was not good enough for SASC: in its opinion the ineffectuality and moral laxness of conciliation and constructive engagement had been firmly established. They were ready to force the issue and confident thay could win.

Divestment was a college issue. It was an action to be taken, on the campus, not by our government, not by a foreign government, not by unreachable multinationals, but by the college itself. The student government had taken a poll and more than 60% of the respondents had favored divestment; a majority approved student government action to that end.

Moreover, SASC felt the issue was not only local, but moral. Some students said the issue was more moral than civil rights, certainly more than our cloudy war in Vietnam. One group of people oppressing another because of their race, and that's bad. Hey, man, they like can't even vote. The issue was writ large: if you don't like racism: COME AND DEMONSTRATE. Speakers tended to harp on this simplicity: many speeches around the Harvard shanties drew on the parallel of Nazi Germany.

People who came out to demonstrate were often ill-informed. A 9th grader who came by one day to learn and to argue was soon taking people to task for not understanding the issues. He'd heard, and thought there was some truth in the argument, that divestment would hurt blacks in South Africa more than it would hurt whites. Only one person he talked to, he said, really understood what he was talking about. To many, the issue was simply that they're bad, and if we withdraw our support we won't be guilty, and they won't be bad anymore.

There was another advantage to the issue- not its proximity but its distance. I mean, after all, South Africa is 10,000 miles away. Nothing to worry about here, right Jack?

Right. You might even think "Hey, so I'm a little immoral, a little prejudiced, but it's nothing compared to them over there." Raising questions of closer racism made people uncomfortable. When the small movements of the radical left such as the Spartacists appeared carrying signs like "From Soweto to South Boston, Racism Must End," SASC members either ignored them or were annoyed by such a blatant muddying of the issue.

SASC was hoping for a strong turnout in the spring. It wanted to attract everyone's attention by demonstration, noise, and spectacle. And it deliberated for a long time over what to do.

In January I talked with a friend who was one of its enthusiastic freshman

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supporters. He told me that they were planning to erect a shantytown and an "Ivory Tower" to go with it. Secrecy, he assured me, was vital. When I asked why, he gave me a condescending stare. "We don't want the wrong people to find out."

The paranoia became more noticeable. It may have originated in the previous spring, when one SASC member was quite sure his phone line was tapped. Surprising official knowledge of a SASC protest suggests he may have been right. In any case, SASC's behavior became even more secretive. Public meetings, which tended to drag on for hours were supplemented by committee meetings of selected members- the inner circle.The final stages of The Ivory Tower and the shanties were planned and executed by a nine person committee.

The Solidarity Committee, which often seemed to have more solidarity with itself than with anyone else, behaved like a vanguard party. It honestly seemed to feel, like the Bolsheviks in 1917, that the only way to demonstrate the people's support for a cause was to keep the true nature of the struggle out of the hands of the masses until everything had been organized. Of course they did not, any more than the well-intentioned Bolsheviks, exclude anyone from their revolution. They merely demanded "commitment"- which meant meetings, meetings, and more meetings, spiced with a good deal of bureaucracy. There was precious little activism, and what there was cloaked in mystery and pageantry.

Perhaps SASC was right, because the wrong people didn't find out about the shanties. When I snuck up to Currier House to build the sides of the tower, I was solemnly sworn to secrecy. The administration was as surprised as the students when, at about one on a Tuesday morning, a truck drove through Harvard Yard's Johnston Gate and into the middle of a crowd of two hundred exuberant SASC members. Within two hours both the 16-foot high wooden Ivory Tower, complete with green dollar-sign flag, and the three wood and plastic shanties had been mounted. Posters were added, slogans were spray-painted on the plastic, volunteers put their blankets and sleeping bags down, and Harvard deans wandered around, bemused but amiable, making sure no one broke anything. The gathering was by far the year's largest divestment rally on campus.

As everything before the shanties was really building up to them, everything after the night they went up was curiously flat and anticlimactic. "We need to sustain," a speaker told the crowd on the first day, "to keep commitment up for the long haul." But even that first day was enough to drive some away: the organizational meetings at the shanties took hours.

Three weeks later the shanties were partially vacant at night, and by May people had to leave a Central American rally to staff them. The only regulars left, at night at least, were the five to ten street people who had made it their home. Besides worrying SASC people by occasionally having epileptic fits, they gave the shantytown (also called the Open University) another reason to exist, but the diversity they provided and the new issues they raised were not on SASC's agenda.

There was a remarkable lack of mess, of disturbance, of ugly rioting and demonstration. After the shanties went up, there was never another big disturbance. And the days following the erection were more more filled with busy SASCers running around to conferences with college deans then they were with angry demonstrations or impassioned activity. The "Free Speech Board," erected as part of an effort to broaden the base of activity, stayed noticeably free of announcements concerning any campus group except SASC and The Committee on Central America (COCA). The celebrated Open University, and its beautiful Albert Lethuli Hall (a really impressive wood and corrugated tar-paper shack) featured a lecture on Esperanto, a VCR bash, and a lot of stand-up comedy/politics by SASC members, but little common cause.

In fact, the biggest rise the shanties got out of the Harvard community was a petition, signed by about half the seniors, which asked they be taken down before graduation, in order that the

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famous beauty of Harvard Yard not be marred in the eyes of all their proud relatives.

There was also a counter-shanty erected by the Conservative Club. Called the "Closed University," it was a black shack supposedly representing a gulag, or what education would be like in the Soviet Union. The Conservative Club said it merely wanted to point out the irony of SASC's protest in our free society: besides, they thought the shanties were really ugly anyway.

The shanties brought out another ironic fact about SASC: there was only one black member, and no widespread minority support for the organization.Neither the Black Students Association nor the Third World Student's Alliance took part in the building of the shanties, neither sent their members to stay in them.The Black Student's Association, it was rumored, accepted the idea of the shanties but were far from participating themselves. But no one ever apppeared to confirm or deny this. Whenever I talked to my friend Reuben, who, as well as being secretary of the Third World Student Alliance and high in the Chicano Students' Group was also a transitory Joe Kennedy supporter: whenever I talked to this open-minded, generally activist guy about SASC, he would growl, and mutter about their unwillingness to communicate, their inability to understand how blacks and minorities felt about the issue, and their general smug liberal superiority.

SASC was slightly more successful with the Committee on Central America, but that may be a bit deceptive. There was one Puerto Rican woman who was strongly involved in both, but it often seemed that the most ardent COCA supporters of SASC were the white middle-class fellow-travellers.

All which is only to say that SASC did not pull people together on the campus: in some very serious ways it pushed tham apart. My friends in the rock department on the radio station, and a lot of the punkrockers and rockers I know, thought SASC was the most self indulgent, wishwashy, white liberal thing they could imagine. They wanted crisp, self-concerned and isolationist anarchism- if they wanted anything. They seemed to share with the Spartacists a commitment to clean up their own houses.

My would-be-literary friends seemed even farther away.Their individualism denied political activism, mass action, or the political convictions for youth in general.

Splintering is what the left often seems all about, and some movements manage it with more grace than others. The Democratic Party was quite good at it for a long time: maintaining an external illusion of glue while all inside was fragments. I think anthropologists call it a tribal empire.

But on the Harvard campus SASC didn't work. That doesn't mean political activism is dead at Harvard. COCA did a lot of good work, possibly because so many of its members were from or had visited Central America. I wasn't directly in Third World Student's Alliance, but I gather it did a lot of good work on campus.

The irony of course was that a great many people in SASC were aware that it didn't work, and yet seemed unable to solve its problems. But there is hope. A group called Students Against Racism was formed just before summer vacation, and it may yet find a way to reconcile the well-intentioned but divided liberal community at Harvard. What may happen sooner, of course, is the end of South African government as we know it. In which case, South Boston may not seem so unimportant after all.

At Wesleyan

Greg Berman

Although the South African Action Group was established at Wesleyan University years ago, it was only recently that divestment became the cause celebre on campus. Wesleyan, a small liberal arts university in Connecticut with a student body of 2800 men and women, has the reputation of a last bastion of liberal activism, so it came as no surprise when the issue of divestment began dominating the school last year. Being against divestment became a social stigma only to be admitted in hushed tones for fear of arousing the indignance of some eavesdropping student. An active pro-divestment stance was considered de rigueur for inclusion in any political conversation, be it about South Africa or not.

With SAAG leading the way, Wesleyan students produced an impressive number of demonstrations for this allegedly apathetic and age. Though a highly fractured community, Wesleyan students still managed to get 1500 signatures on a petition calling for divestment. In April 1985, 450 students rallied for divestment in the largest campus protest

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since the Vietnam War. Last fall, 130 students were arrested for blockading the administration building. Classes were boycotted and a shanty was built to dramatize the school's role in the oppresion of blacks. Then, this April, 120 students protested a board of trustees meeting so vigorously that it was moved to another location. All of this activism earned Wesleyan attention in *The New York Times* and *Rolling Stone*.

Although the university has not divested, Wesleyan students have led one of the more visible divestment movements in the country. They have mobilized the student body, attracted publicity to their cause and put pressure on the administration. Yet the appearance of student unity is deceiving. The minor success stories of the movement are overshadowed by some disturbing problems. The large majority of students remain apathetic or worse, intimidated by a vocal minority into silent acquiesence. Black participation in the protests has been negligible. Most importantly, the movement has lacked cohesive leadership.

Divestment protests have been held on a seemingly continuous basis at Wesleyan. Most were far less well-attended than the aforementioned examples. When all is said and done, the "divestment movement" at Wesleyan usually boiled down to twenty or thirty people who appeared at every protest. Their presence signaled whether an activity could be considered "politically correct." Instead of acting as an informal vanguard, these diehards were unintentional political bullies, stifling conservatives and moderates and alienating many pro-divestment students like myself. This band of students was an intimidating presence because of their passion. Their active pro-divestment stance allowed them to don the cloak of moral purity. The ferocity with which they advocated divestment could not be rivalled by those with opposing views. As a result, debate on campus was almost non-existent in regards to South Africa. Because there was no vocal opposition to the militant protestors, one was easily misled into believing that they represented the majority of students. This was not the case. Increasingly, they brought resentment instead of sympathy to their cause.

Many of the divestment hard-liners were members of SAAG. SAAG began the school year as the undisputed voice of the movement. As the spring semester closed out, even the die-hards had grown disenchanted with the organization. SAAG was unable to sustain any momentum created by the arrest of 130 students in the fall. The spring semester saw an even greater decline in the effectiveness of SAAG. Late in the semester, someone, either students or townspeople, tried to destroy the shanty SAAG had built in front of the administration building. Remembering how a similar event had ignited the Dartmouth campus, I rushed to an early morning emergency meeting of SAAG. Instead of the teeming masses of irate students I expected, I was greeted by a round-up of ten of the usual suspects. Although a D.C. city councilman once claimed that he could start a revolution with six people and a phone booth, the few members of SAAG who attended that "emergency meeting" proved incapable of even publicizing the attempted destruction of the shanty on campus, let alone nationally. Here was an event that had the potential to awaken even the most apathetic student, yet SAAG could not capitalize on it. No major rally resulted from this obvious spark.

The fear of a leader-dominated movement so petrified SAAG that it had become totally ineffectual. Simply speaking, SAAG was cursed with too many leaders and not enough followers. No one was willing to play a subordinate role. When one student began to dominate SAAG, the reaction of the other members of the group was horror. By the end of the year he was no longer active in SAAG. Attempting to run the group by consensus proved impossible. Although some sort of hierarchy seemed essential, SAAG refused to submit to the inevitable. Until their structural problems are worked out, SAAG will remain incapable of leading the struggle.

As problematic as SAAG was, it could have been saved by Ujamaa, the main black student organization on campus. Ujamaa made little effort to sponsor demonstrations or to publicize them. As a result, black participation was distressingly low. Ujamaa could easily

CORRECTION
In our last issue we gave the wrong telephone number for the Institute for Local Self-Reliance. The correct number is 202-232-4108

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have stepped into the leadership void created by SAAG's declining potency. It did not. Allegedly, internal leadership problems were the cause of Ujamaa's negligence. If Ujamaa plays a larger role in the upcoming school year, the divestment movement is sure to pick up intensity and support.

The movement would also accelerate if one of its underlying themes was verbalized, that is: student power. The disagreement of students and administration over South African policy has sparked a greater struggle for control of the school. There is little doubt that this larger issue accounts for the tenacity with which each side is clinging to their position. On the one side is a group of concerned students who view the university's reticence to divest as indicative of a trend of favoring economic factors at the expense of moral and educational ones. These students covet Wesleyan's image of a haven for non-careerist students. Recent decisions by university president Colin Campbell have come under student criticism for compromising Wesleyan's unique standards. The best examples of student dissatisfaction with the administration are the perceived shift in admission policy to play down Wesleyan's "funkiness" in order to compete with Williams and Amherst for pre-professional students and Campbell's support of science faculty attempts to institute academic requirements at Wesleyan because they will attract more grants from foundations. On the other side is a belligerent administration, refusing to budge an inch--to do so would mean knuckling under student pressure. Each side wants to define what Wesleyan is and will be. Campbell clearly sensed this battle when he called the demonstration at the board of trustees meeting an "un-Wesleyan type of protest."

For the moment, the future of a student power movement looks much brighter than that of the divestment movement. While many students are opposed to or unconcerned about divestment, nearly every student would advocate greater student control of the institution. The divestment movement would certainly benefit from any connection between the two causes. Even if this is not possible, there is a glimmer of hope for the divestment movement. Luckily, for Wesleyan, SAAG did not represent all of the students who were in favor of divestment. The student body is far too intelligent to be saddled with leadership problems forever. While SAAG has probably run its course, there is the hope that a more successful organization will emerge from its ashes.

SWP wins against the FBI
A federal judge has ruled that a 36-year effort by the FBI to disrupt the Socialist Workers Party was "patently unconstitutional." He awarded $264,000 to the party, which had been subjected to the infiltration of over a thousand informers, including three who ran for public office. During the '60s, about one out of ten members of the party were in the pay of the FBI. The FBI also committed 193 buglaries, removed or photographed nearly 10,000 documents and engaged in wiretapping against the party.

Reagan arming Central America
US arms sales to Central America last year were thirteen times as great as during the entire Carter administration. Further, 1985 sales, reports RECON, were more than double Reagan's own first term average.

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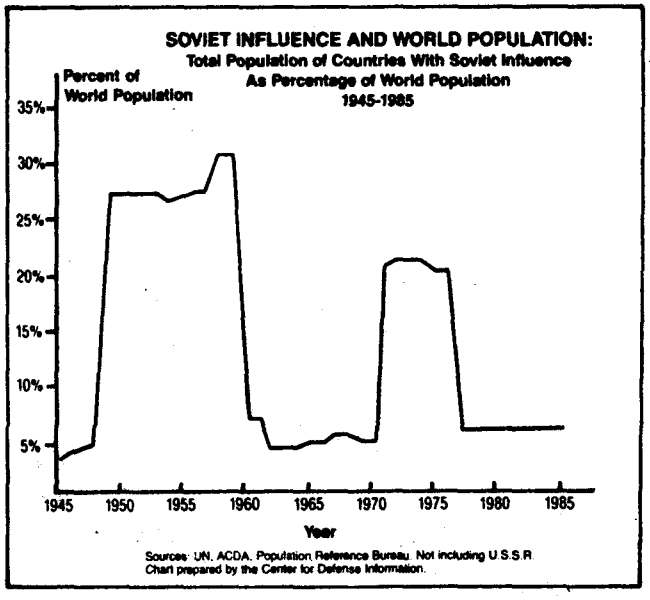
EVIL EMPIRE UPDATE



Countries with Significant Soviet Influence

Today	In The Past
Afghanistan	Albania
Angola	Algeria
Bulgaria	Bangladesh
Cambodia	China
Cuba	Congo
Czechoslovakia	Egypt
Ethiopia	Ghana
East Germany	Guinea
Hungary	India
Laos	Indonesia
Libya	Iraq
Mongolia	North Korea
Mozambique	Mali
Poland	Somalia
Romania	Sudan
Syria	North Yemen
Vietnam	Yugoslavia
South Yemen	

Chart prepared by the Center for Defense Information.

The charts on these two pages are from a report in **Defense Monitor**, published by the Center for Defense Information. Copies of the full report are available for $3.00 from CDI, 1500 Mass Ave NW, DC 20005.

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Periods of Soviet Influence 1945-1986

		Albania Bulgaria East Germany Poland Romania									
	Mongolia	Yugoslavia	North Korea	Hungary	Czechoslovakia	China					
Gains		1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951			
Losses					Yugoslavia						
					Syria		Indonesia Iraq	Guinea			
Gains	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959			
Losses							Syria				
	Ghana Mali		North Yemen	Algeria		Vietnam	Syria	Egypt			
Gains	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967			
Losses	China	Albania Guinea	Indonesia	Iraq		Algeria	Ghana				
	Congo Iraq	Cuba Somalia Sudan		Guinea India	Bangladesh		Libya	Angola Laos Mozambique			
Gains	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975			
Losses	Mali	North Korea North Yemen		Sudan	Egypt			Bangladesh			
		Ethiopia	Afghanistan South Yemen	Cambodia							
Gains	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Losses		Guinea India Somalia	Iraq		Congo						

This chart identifies the most significant periods of "pro-Soviet" orientation for 35 nations. The intensity of a country's closeness to the Soviet Union is not identical in each case. The other 129 countries in the world have never come under significant Soviet influence.

Chart prepared by the Center for Defense Information.

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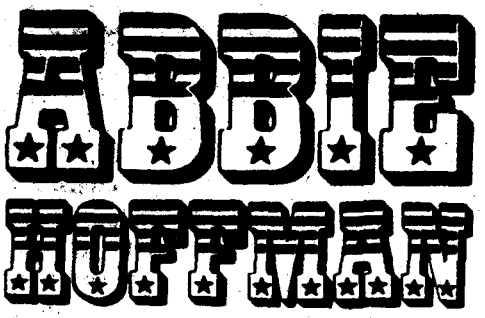

on the left & language

I've always been made on the left to feel embarrassed about being popular. My books have sold about two-and-a-half million copies. Maybe three now, I don't know.

I have an article on community organizing that was in *Parade* magazine with 27 million readers. I had to rewrite it 20 times making it more simple. This is not as easy to do as it reads.

You have to take complicated ideas and make them simple, the language has to be constantly gone over for certain words that Americans will read and tune out on, and you have to be aware of a very short attention span.

I've compared it closer to writing advertising copy than to, say, writing a book like Murray Bookchin. Now, I appreciate Murray Bookchin, but if I want to talk about what Murray is saying I have to boil it down to one or two ideas and then I have to translate it into American because this is just simply not the language that large numbers of people use.

Since the collapse of the trade union movement, the left has been trapped in academia. The language reflects that.

This is a difficult area, because now they'll say, "Well, you're not serious," or "You mean we've got to make ourselves saleable commodities," when all I'm saying is, "Look, this is how this society communicates."

It communicates through symbols, styles, personalities, issues, it's non-literate and non-ideological, it's visual imagery, short bursts one minute long. That's a TV commercial and you think just because something has five volumes that it's giving more information than that one minute?

Maybe yes, maybe no, but those one minutes transmit a lot of information. The art of communication is finding the one word that says what you want. Yippie was one of those words. That was a good word. Solidarity. Justice. Sanctuary. My mind scans constantly for key words to express and motivate people.

When we started Yippie! it was to get people to go to Chicago to demonstrate the new culture and protest the war. We didn't have a big bureaucratic structure, we didn't have money, we didn't have control of the media. We had some underlying philosophical notions of course—the attack against guilt and original sin, for example.

Also, we attacked boredom. I still believe that the best organizers understand people are easily bored in our society and if you add to that boredom you are a piss-poor organizer and, in a sense, adding to their oppression.

People in power can afford to bore people. They're in power, they don't have to be creative. I'm not saying we can all be extraordinarily talented as communicators but it's the rare leftist that even tries to improve.

You pick up a left journal, you don't read about real problems that activists share. For example, what happens when one member of a couple gets disillusioned?

I want to understand why the left doesn't understand about depression, why it always associates it with their politics. I want to understand why there aren't more discussions about small-group psychology, about decision-making in small groups, about what motivates people, about the mechanics of making things work.

It's true there is an element on the left that thinks if it's popular it's bad. There are people that want to reach the proletariat masses but brag about not watching TV.

I don't know where the proletariat mass is in the United States, to tell you the truth. I don't know where that is and if you're plugged into that language you're not operating in this world, you're not a serious person.

I'm an organizer, not an activist. An activist goes to meetings, an organizer knocks on doors. I have spoken at Kiwanis clubs. I have spoken to the League of Women Voters in New Jersey. I have spoken at an American Legion Hall.

I want to reach people that are not the believers, that are not already there. I want to reach people who are confused about what's going on in Central America and don't understand it. I want to reach Americans. —Overthrow

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Fallout Dangers of Star Wars

E.J. Sternglass

A technologically perfect missile shield that is capable of intercepting every incoming nuclear warhead would in all probability still fail to protect the US. No shield, no matter how effective, would prevent radioactive fallout produced in space from damaging all living things on our planet. Not only would bombs exploded in space drop radioactivity on earth — but the defensive system itself could add to the fallout.

The Pentagon is considering deploying hundreds, even thousands, of X-ray laser weapons, each of which would be powered by a hydrogen bomb explosion. At least half of the resulting long-lived radioisotopes (such as strontium-90, cesium-137, and plutonium-239) would disperse into our atmosphere. Several life-threatening results would certainly follow, including depletion of the ozone in the stratosphere. Ozone filters much of the sun's damaging ultraviolet radiation; weakening of the ozone layer would contaminate crops, livestock, milk, and water all over the globe, as well as produce blindness and skin cancer in epidemic proportions.

Even the "cleanest" H-bombs (those producing the least radioactivity) would inject into the atmosphere large quantities of radioactive carbon-14, which has a half-life of 5770 years. Linus Pauling and Andrei Sakharov both demonstrated in the late 1950s that carbon-14 is one of the most destructive radioisotopes because it damages the carbon present in all molecules, including in the DNA of genes. The two scientists calculated independently that a single one-megaton bomb detonated anywhere above the earth's surface would cause between 10,000 and 60,000 human deaths and a comparable number of serious birth defects, some of which would result in additional early deaths. Cancers and ordinary infectious diseases would be the main killers. Because the body's immune system is damaged or destroyed by radiation (as in the AIDS disease), those exposed might die from an infection as simple as the common cold.

Even if a Star Wars defense does not use such X-ray lasers, deadly fallout would nonetheless threaten us, for offensive missiles exploded in space would rain radiation on earth. Nuclear warheads can be designed to explode on sensing imminent destruction (sensors detect intense heat or fast-moving projectiles, and "salvage fuses" detonate the bomb), as Richard Garwin detailed recently in the *Journal of International Affairs* (Vol. 39, No. 1, 1985). Warheads might be equipped with this mechanism to enhance their destructive power in the face of a missile defense; for example, they could disrupt communications-and-control systems.

E.J. Sternglass, Professor Emeritus of Radiological Physics at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, is the author of Secret Fallout *(McGraw–Hill, 1981), a study of the widespread illness and death caused by nuclear power plants and weapons production and testing.*

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Fallout cont'd

A space-based defensive system would pose radiation dangers just by being deployed — whether or not it was used. The hundreds of satellite stations necessary to fire missiles, lasers, and particle beams and to coordinate battle would require highly powerful energy sources, small and lightweight. A nuclear reaction is the only known means of producing energy at that level of efficiency. Theorists such as Eliot Marshall envision numerous multi-megawatt nuclear reactors orbiting in space. The dangers of reactors on earth, constantly monitored and adjusted, are familiar, but imagine the difficulty of maintaining them in space. If an accident occurred — or if some force deflected them from their regular orbits, causing them to burn up — vast amounts of radioactivity could descend to earth.

Most experts foresee grave, perhaps insurmountable, problems in developing a missile shield to defend only a limited number of military sites. But if scientists somehow succeed in building a system that protects ground structures from destruction by blast, fire, and heat, the shield will not protect life on the planet. Radioactive fallout would most likely devastate the environment and the human race.

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The worst-covered stories of last year

Rohnert Park, Calif. -- The heaviest bombing and most awesome aerial war ever seen in the Americas topped the list of under-reported news stories of 1985 according to a national panel of media critics.

Project Censored, a national media research project now in its tenth year, locates stories about significant issues which have not been widely reported by the national news media.

Project Director Carl Jensen, professor of Communication Studies at Sonoma State University, California, said, "while the U.S. press covered every possible angle of Coca Cola's formula change last year, it totally failed to report an extraordinary secret aerial war being waged against the civilian population in El Salvador."

Following are the top ten "censored" stories of 1985:

1. *Fierce Aerial War in El Salvador.* The intense bombing of noncombatant civilians, supervised by the U.S. Department of Defense, is reportedly responsible for most of El Salvador's 500,000 internal refugees and for many of the 750,000 refugees outside the country's borders.

2. *Military Toxic Wastes.* Each year the military generates more than half a million tons of hazardous waste, including radioactive wastes, chemical solvents, and leaking nerve gas rockets, and the military is not subject to Environmental Protection Agency regulations which monitor industrial waste procedures.

3. *Ten Years of Genocide in East Timor.* Amnesty International reported that it is now estimated that up to 200,000 East Timorese, a third of the population, have died as a result of Indonesian policies in the region. This tragedy, conducted with U.S.-supplied arms, has been unreported by the American press since it started in 1975.

4. *The Reagan Revolution: Liberty Under Siege.* In 1985, the Reagan administration quietly but effectively continued to expand the power of the presidency by applying cost-benefit principles to government which undermine the power of the law, the courts, the Congress, and the people. The "Reagan Autocracy" was strengthened in 1985 by Executive Order 12498 which gave the White House power to review, control, approve, or suppress any agency activity that may result in any rule-making proceedings.

5. *Media Merger Mania Threatens Information Flow.* The drive for profits, coupled with the collapse of the Federal Communications Commission in 1985, led to a frenzy of media mergers and paved the way for an international information monopoly. Alarmed by the $6.3 billion RCA/NBC takeover by General Electric last year, consumer advocate Ralph Nader warned of the increased threat of censorship resulting from conglomerate self-interest, saying, "Self-censorship is alive and well in the U.S. media."

6. *Terata: The Birth Defect Epidemic.* Twelve percent of all babies born in the United States this year will have a serious, often incurable, mental or physical health disorder. The number of abnormal newborns has doubled since the late 1950s and some of the worst abnormalities are increasing at alarming rates; the cause is now being linked to environmental disasters.

7. *Phony "Star Wars" Test Result.* Administration officials are covering up scientific failures with the "Star Wars" project in an effort to sell the program to a skeptical American public. The need for continuing "Star Wars" tests is the major reason President Reagan won't respond to the Soviet proposal for a comprehensive nuclear test ban.

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8. *Nuclear Decapitation Study.* A highly-classified Congressional study, known as the "Nuclear Decapitation Study," revealed that the U.S. strategic command and control system could easily be knocked out quickly in nuclear war. This led to the rapid and unheralded development of GWEN -- Ground Wave Emergency Network -- which calls for construction of 57 30-story communication towers to be built throughout the United States this year.

9. *Federal Government Rips Off the Homeless.* Homelessness is a national emergency on a scale unheard of since the Great Depression. Yet, a federal task force, established by the Department of Health and Human Services in 1983, has totally failed to reduce the problem as a result of waste and corruption in federal agencies such as the Department of Defense, Housing and Urban Development, and the General Services Administration.

10. *High-tech Health Hazards.* The "clean" high-tech industry may be America's new occupational nightmare. Poisonings are twice as common among semiconductor workers as they are among employees in other industries and work-related illnesses occur three-and-one-half times more frequently than in manufac - turing as a whole. Some high-tech health problems include respiratory disease, chemical sensitization, hypertension, radiation hazards, reproductive problems, and cancer.

The other 15 under-reported stories of 1985 were: The Global Struggle for Water, Nicaraguan Contra Aid and the International Court of Justice, Prison Rape: The Subject No One Wants To Talk About, U.S. Public Relations Firms Profit From Bloody Dictatorships, Underground Fuel Tanks Contaminate Nation's Drinking Water, NRC "Nukes" Safety in Licensing U.S. Nuclear Power Plants, Leonard Peltier: Murderer or America's Andrei Sakharov?, Agribusiness Is Destroying Agriculture, FAA Ignores Inexpensive Midair Collision-Avoidance Device, Campus Gang Rape, Tobacco Industry Appeals To Children And The Third World, America Slaughters Its Dairy Cows While Children Starve To Death, American Media Ignore the Deaths of 60 U.S. Servicemen in 1985, The Green River Murder Case, and The National Institutes of Health Seek Stronger Tobacco Plant.

Anyone interested in nominating a 1986 story for next year's project can send a copy of the story to Dr. Carl Jensen, Project Censored, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, CA 94928

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CHUCK STONE
Studying black students

If America, according to that government report, is "a nation at risk" in education, then blacks in education are "a race at disaster."

Check out this dismal statistical yardstick:

■ In six states where teachers tests are administered, the failure rates for black applicants are four to five times that of whites. In Texas, the black failure rate was 18 times that of whites.

■ Last year, for students taking the Scholastic Aptitude Test, whites had combined scores on the verbal and mathematics sections of 940. The average combined black score was 722.

That's pretty disastrous.

Instead of attacking this problem head on, many black educators are shuckin' and jivin' at conferences and meetings while others come up with solutions.

Three groups dramatically reflect these differential responses.

"The Thomas group" is a group of black educators and politicians convened by Dr. Arthur Thomas, a street-smart, hustling dude who is president of Central State College in Ohio.

Calling itself "The Select Committee on the Education of Black Youth," Thomas's ad hoc group of "19 black luminaries" (according to Education Week) met recently in Washington and plans to proclaim a "national manifesto," hold a "national forum," and issue a "report to the nation."

Isn't that an impressive bunch of non-productive b------ on how to solve an immediate crisis?

Thomas didn't have to convene any group of "black leaders."

All he needs to do is make Central State College a shining example of black achievement that can serve as a model for other back institutions of higher education. But he can't.

And Central State continues to admit black students who can't function in any other collegiate setting.

In addition, the Thomas group could have examined those public secondary schools in Philadelphia, Detroit, the Bronx and Berkeley where black kids are high achievers, and then replicate the successful formula.

But "rapping a problem to death" is more therapeutic than solving it.

The Wingspread group — a lovely exercise in white paternalism — was convened by the Johnson Foundation at the Wingspread conference center in Racine, Wis., to discuss the education of black Americans.

This group of 200 black educators, researchers and advocacy group representatives was addressed by Undersecretary of Education Gary L. Bauer, who told them — get ready for this one because it's going to freak you out — *the Bill Cosby show and its values ultimately will be more important to black children's success than federal programs!*

"Don't you dare insult me like this today!" exploded Christella Moody, an administrator at Eastern Michigan University. "I know I couldn't have gotten ahead and others like me couldn't have gotten ahead without that help."

Finally, the Lang group.

Five years ago, a millionaire industrialist and philanthropist, Eugene Lang, pledged to put an entire graduating class from P.S. 121 in East Harlem through college.

This year, similar pledges were made to 425 graduating students in Bedford-Stuyvesant and Harlem schools by six other business executives, including 31-year-old Wall Street stockbroker Paul Tudor Jones 2nd and Dianne Sullivan, founder and president of Miraflores Designs.

The Lang groups is not holding meetings.

It's guaranteeing the college education for black kids, which encourages them to stay in school.

Even the Educational Testing Service, which produces the tests that have barred black educational advancement, is re-examining items on some of their norm-referenced tests for possible racial bias.

In the meantime, the Thomas and Wingspread groups are meeting, bleating and sucking their dialectical thumbs while black kids continue to go down the educational drain.

Philadelphia Daily News

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WORDWAYS
L. Michael Bell

In one of his last broadcasts for National Public Radio, the late John Ciardi introduced us to "Dame Jeanne," a hypothetical wine dealer of 17th-century France whose physique and bearing might be described as "prow-bosomed." Ciardi speculated convincingly that "Lady Jane" made an impression vivid enough for her name to survive, somewhat distorted, in the English word for a broad-shouldered, usually wickercovered bottle holding at least a gallon of wine: the *demi john*. (Pronounce "Dame Jeanne" in roughly the French way and you'll get the idea.)

It was delightful to be reacquainted with her. I believe that "Lady Jane" was related to an old acquaintance of my family's, a female dervish who was locally known as Spinning Jenny. Jenny was such a lover of small draft animals and wild birds that both the donkeys and the wrens, it is said, resolved to name all their female offspring after her thenceforward. Indeed, her talent seems to have run in the family. The goats bred by her cousin Billy are still famous wherever English is spoken, though her nephew Thomas's crossbred cats have not been a popular show breed for some centuries. At last report he had switched to turkey husbandry.

Jenny's most famous relative, however, is her son and namesake John, nicknamed Jack. His brilliant career began inauspiciously. She passed on to him all her practical knowledge of donkey-breeding, but his culminating achievement was a stubborn and unintelligent species of ass. Discouraged, he turned to wildbird husbandry, achieving his first success with a still-popular variety of the daw (*Corvus monedula*). Now fired with confidence, he took up experimental botany, producing in short order the Jack pine, Jack oak, Jack-in-the-pulpit, and Johnny-jum-up.

Jack was incurably peripatetic, taking his creative talents from one field to another. History credits him *by name* with design innovations in boots, playing cards, festive Halloween lanterns, hand-held pneumatic hammers, devices for lifting automobiles, pocket knives, apple brandy, pancakes, boxes of candied popcorn with prizes inside, and hip-length coats. In the saloons of the early American West, he struck such a figure in his all-black gambling outfit, and was so adept at the game of "vingt-et-un," that veteran gamblers renamed it for him. Legend has it that they also designated the game's biggest prize (formerly called only the "pot") in his honor.

Bored with constant success, Jack drifted to the Oregon lumber camps, where he proved such an exemplary logger that many in the profession are popularly known by his name. Not content with engraving his name on just one occupation, he repeated the feat as an ordinary seaman in the British navy. The man was so versatile, in fact, that his name has become a "generic" for any Tom, Dick, or Harry who distinguishes himself by being handy at many trades, or who by always being on the spot when help is needed.

Critics say that in later life his speedy adaptability grew sluggish, and that he became known as something of a Johnny-come-lately. But he bestowed upon posterity a son and namesake with some of his engineering skills. In collaboration with Thomas Crapper, a leading water-closet manufacturer, the son patented and named after himself a revolutionary flush toilet that was soon practically a synonym for "bathroom." But insufficient vigilance to copyright led this word to a common fate; and today, we are unaware of using defrocked brand names when we go looking for *aspirin, linoleum,* and *formica--or the men's john.*

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EUGENE McCARTHY
Eras & Epochs

On his way to the island of Bali in late April, President Reagan dropped down at the China Lake Naval Weapons Center in California to perform what the administration's Director of Personnel Management, Constance Horner, declared to be an "epochal" act.

The announcement received less attention than it should have, since epochs do not come along often and historically have lasting and significant consequences. Admittedly this epoch was a low-level one, an announcement of a proposal to simplify the civil service and extend the pay principles of private industry to the federal work force. Obviously it does not rank with the Bible's great flood, an event long recognized as of epochal proportions - floating the Ark and making Noah's reputation.

If this epoch stands the test of time, it will be the first presidential epoch in the history of the United States. Recent presidents have been more heavily into "eras," starting them or ending them, or being caught in them. In fact there have been more eras identified by "eraists," that is, experts in eras, in the last thirty years than were noted in the whole period of modern history--beginning with the "Era of Napoleon" as history turned into the nineteenth century, and ending with the "Era of Good Feeling" following World War 1.

The current rash of eras began in 1957 with the launching of Sputnik by the Russians. Era watchers immediately noted that in this new era, the world would need a new philosophy, new theology, and new economic, social, and political forms. But before these changes and accommodations could be made, a new and more demanding "era" was upon us, that of "nuclear biology" in which, it was said, the "nature of man" was to be changed--thus making irrelevant the earlier findings of philosophy, theology, and social and political thought, which might have been useful to the creatures with the old "nature of man."

At the same time that these great and overriding cosmic eras were coming and going and overleaping each other, lesser eras were also running their own course. Thus, the end of the Vietnam War in the seventies was declared by the Wall Street Journal to mark the end of an era--in this case the end of an era which had never been recognized while it was in force. The era of the sixties, meanwhile had come and gone.

In the Carter Administration, with Zbigniew Brzezinski as advisor to the President, an announcement was made that a new era in international relations had begun with the recognition of China.

The Nixon Administration, even with the help and guidance of Henry Kissinger, never claimed that it had started an era or an epoch, although it did have a number of "firsts" including the "incursion" into Cambodia, the first incursion conducted by the United States in its history (as distinguished from a number of invasions), and the first presidential resignation in the history of that office.

The Reagan Administration this year, well into its sixth year of power, has not claimed or been credited with either starting, experiencing, or weathering an era. It has not even claimed a Nixon-like first.

The invasion of Grenada came close to being a first, but it was not different enough from invasions and intrusions into Caribbean islands and Central American countries by other American presidents--most recently President Kennedy who half-heartedly invaded Cuba, and President Johnson who did the same in the Dominican Republic. Lebanon might have been a first for President Reagan, but for the fact that President Eisenhower sent marines into that country in the mid fifties under cover of the "Eisenhower Doctrine."

So now we come to the epoch claimed by the Reagan Administration but not yet validated by epochists, who are in short supply and somewhat out of practice. It is possible that the distinguishing mark of the Reagan Administration will be its "epochal character." An epoch can start an era. It can also end one. What starts out an epoch may turn into an era. On the other hand an epoch can be shortlived. An epoch may be a first, but it need not be. We may, without knowing it, already be living in the epoch of Ronald Reagan, marked by a national debt likely to reach three trillion dollars by 1989--the end of the Reagan Administration, or era.

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CHARLES McDOWELL
Dr. Sheldrake's rats

The first I ever heard of Dr. Rupert Sheldrake, he was on my car radio and he was talking about rats finding their way through a maze. He said rats might be slow to solve the puzzle at first, but subsequent generations of the same rats will learn the maze much more quickly.

I doubted that and started to turn Dr. Sheldrake off. I know little of science, and that might be why challenges to its simplest principles make me nervous.

But in this case (and for reasons that I devoutly hope were not in the realm of parapsychology), I kept listening.

Dr. Sheldrake said that after 20 generations or so, the rats have whipped through the maze 10 times faster than the original learners. I hastened to assume that the young rats had learned from their parents, perhaps by following the parents in the maze or at least by watching sharply from nearby cages. Surely they had not inherited the knowledge of the maze.

No, it was worse than that. Dr. Sheldrake contended that generations of rats learning the maze had created a "morphogenetic field" — a kind of universal, residual force — that influenced rats in the same maze years later.

After 20 generations of rats had reduced the maze to a cakewalk, he said, some totally unrelated rats in another part of the world were tested in the maze. They negotiated it so fast that they broke the record!

This was, of course, an outrageous fraud to foist upon the public, and I did turn Dr. Sheldrake off.

Now, a year later, Michael Kernan of the Washington Post has written an interesting and sneakily respectful article about him. Dr. Sheldrake turns out to be a scientist with degrees from Cambridge and Harvard and an author of books about his theory of the morphogenetic field. He got into it through his specialty, plant physiology, when he could not otherwise explain certain phenomena in plants.

The original rat-maze experiments, by the way, were conducted at Harvard in 1920. The unrelated rats who allegedly picked up their skill in the maze from the morphogenetic field were in Australia and Scotland.

Reading about all this in the Washington Post, I was somewhat less skeptical than I had been while listening to the car radio a year earlier. I discussed Dr. Sheldrake's theory with a couple of younger colleagues and they were distinctly less skeptical than I.

Was the morphogenetic field at work

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here? Or was something in black and white in the newspaper simply more believable than a voice in the night on a lonely road?

Anyhow, the newspaper said a recent competition encouraged by an open-minded foundation in New York had produced a bunch of experiments supporting Dr. Sheldrake's theory.

In one of them, students with no knowledge of the Persian language studied a mixture of characters from the language and characters that were just made up. The students were then asked to draw the characters they remembered, and they remembered the real ones far more successfully than the made-up ones. People who follow this kind of thing apparently can go on and on citing evidence that what has been learned before hovers somewhere helping us to learn again.

My skepticism is still considerable, but now there is a tiny opening in my shell through which I could be convinced. I shall read Dr. Sheldrake's new book coming from Random House next year. Meanwhile, a specific question has come into my mind and keeps drumming away there.

If Dr. Sheldrake is right, why can't I hit a tennis backhand better?

Members of many generations of human beings have learned to hit a reasonably good backhand before me. They have learned not to get their feet wrong, there grip wrong, their backswing wrong, their arm position wrong and their follow-through wrong — not all at once, anyway. Some have even learned to put topspin on the ball. Since I was a small boy, I have seen hundreds of people hit backhands not only right but with some grace.

So why do I seem to be inventing the backhand stroke — ineptly, awkwardly, always improbably — each time I try it?

If Dr. Sheldrake replies that generations of tennis, as it actually has been played by most human beings, left a huge morphogenetic field of ineptitude on the backhand, I will honor him and feel a little better, too.

Richmond Times - Dispatch

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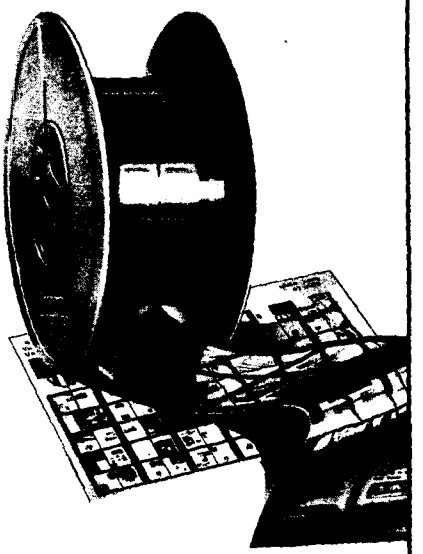

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